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## 3. Survey Content

This chapter provides analysts using the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) with an overview of the survey content. SIPP is a longitudinal survey that collects information on topics such as poverty, income, employment, and health insurance coverage. SIPP *core content* covers demographic characteristics, work experience, earnings, program participation, transfer income, and asset income. Each interview wave contains additional *topical content*, including one or more *topical modules*, allowing the Census Bureau to address a range of subjects.<sup>1</sup>

### The SIPP Interview

With the 1996 Panel, computer-assisted interviewing (CAI) was introduced. SIPP interviewers began using a laptop computer to collect survey data.<sup>2</sup> CAI presents a number of advantages over interviewing with a paper instrument, the method used in previous panels (Chapter 2). Survey elements appear seamless to both the interviewer and the respondent. In addition, the CAI instrument makes certain decisions about which questions to ask, whom to ask, and so forth, that were once left to the discretion of the interviewer. CAI also allows much of the core content from prior waves to be referenced in each interview. The CAI instrument uses responses and complicated logic from one part of the interview in subsequent parts of the interview, which permits checking for consistency and accuracy in the data while the interviewer is still in contact with the household.

This chapter will associate the word *core* with items in the survey that remain constant from one wave to the next, and the word *topical* with items that do not appear in every wave. For both the CAI instrument and the pre-1996 paper survey, data gathered every time the survey is conducted are referred to as *core content*. The *core questionnaire* collects critical labor force, income, and program participation data and is repeated at each interview. Questions asked periodically and targeted to specific topics outside the range of the core content provide *topical content* and are referred to as *topical modules*.

Cooperative, available respondents 15 years of age and older answer questions for themselves, to the extent possible. While questionnaires are not completed for household members under age 15, information is collected about them so that household members under age 15 are fully represented in the SIPP sample. When necessary, information in the CAI instrument is used to determine the next best person in the household with whom a dependent or proxy interview should be conducted; that is often, but not always, the *reference person* (Chapter 2).

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<sup>1</sup> Analysts should consult the actual survey instrument for answers to specific questions about the ordering and wording of survey items. The technical documentation can be ordered separately (Chapter 5). The SIPP Interviewer Procedures Manual also can be ordered from the Census Bureau.

<sup>2</sup> Although all interviews were conducted using an automated survey instrument residing on a laptop, not all interviews were done in person. In some cases, interviews were conducted by phone from the interviewer's home.

*Skip patterns* within SIPP control which questions are asked of each respondent. Skip patterns tailor the questions to the circumstances of the respondent and bypass irrelevant questions. For example, if a respondent has already said that he or she did not work during the reference period, the skip pattern will prevent the interviewer from asking the person what kind of job was held during that time. The CAI instrument automatically calls up the next relevant question, making the skip patterns transparent to both interviewers and respondents. Before the introduction of CAI, interviewers followed instructions on the paper survey in order to skip inappropriate questions. Figure 3-1 illustrates the way in which skip patterns worked in the paper survey. Since CAI handles skip patterns from “behind the scenes,” Figure 3-1 might also be viewed as showing what is invisible in CAI.

**Figure 3-1. Skip Pattern Example**

<p><b>7c. Could . . . have taken a job during those weeks if one had been offered?</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes – <i>Skip to 7e</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><b>7d. What was the main reason . . . could not take a job during those weeks?</b></p> <p><i>Mark (x) only one.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Already had a job</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Temporary illness</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> School</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>Specify</i>) _____</p>

[Notes to interviewers are italicized; respondent's name is filled in; and statements read to respondents are in bold.]

## Core Content

Core questions are typically asked at the start of the interview. At the beginning of each household visit, the Census Bureau interviewer completes or updates a roster listing all household members, verifies basic demographic information about each person, and checks certain facts about the household. The CAI instrument performs “behind the scenes” case management functions at the same time. Prior to the advent of CAI, that information was contained on the *control card*, which provided a mechanism for carrying information forward from one wave to the next for each sample member. Core questions covering key areas of SIPP follow the initial questions. For the most part, the 1996 Panel and prior panels cover the same content; however, the organization of the content within the 1996 CAI instrument is somewhat different.

## **Core Content for 1996 and Subsequent Panels**

SIPP core content covers a variety of topics, including labor force status and employment, earnings, business ownership, assets, income, program participation, child support collection, health insurance, and education, among others. While CAI allows the SIPP interview to proceed seamlessly, analysts will perceive distinct sections within the core data.

### **Employment and Earnings**

The first group of survey questions addresses employment and earnings. This section collects information about the respondent's labor force status for each week of the reference period; identifies characteristics of employers, self-employment, and businesses the respondent might own; and gathers data about earnings, whether from a job or from self-employment. Respondents are asked about their labor force status and any unemployment compensation for a time period covering the beginning of the 4-month reference period up through the date of the interview. The type of work performed and dates of employment are also noted. The interviewer asks respondents who own businesses whether they are active in its management, own it as an investment, or are involved in some combination thereof. The survey also collects data on time spent looking for work, moonlighting, and the current employment situation for up to two jobs and two businesses. Employment status is derived from information about specific jobs.

The flow of the survey is such that questions about employment and job characteristics are asked first, with amounts collected separately. Probes ensure that amounts are reasonable and that gross amounts are obtained. Respondents are asked to refer to records whenever possible.

### **Program, General, and Asset Income**

These questions focus on income from a source other than the respondent's work situation. Many of the questions address income or benefits from programs such as Social Security or Food Stamps (and in 1996 have been adapted to capture postreform welfare benefits); the survey also collects information about retirement, disability and survivors' income, unemployment insurance and workers' compensation as well as severance pay, lump-sum payments from pension or retirement plans, child support, and alimony payments. A set of general income questions takes information collected previously and obtains more details about who is covered, how payments are received, reasons for receiving government transfer income, and other data having to do with program participation. SIPP also collects information on amounts of "roll over" retirement accounts.

To obtain information on asset income, interviewers ask respondents which assets they own, prompting the respondent from a list including U.S. savings bonds, 401(k) plans, stocks, rental property, and the like. Respondents are also asked if they have received any lump-sum or regular payments from an IRA, Keogh, 401(k), or thrift plan. Other questions address income received from assets owned, other than retirement accounts. Income for some assets is collected and

recorded within preset ranges. Most asset income is recorded in exact amounts whenever possible, however. The issue of joint ownership of assets is also addressed.

### **Additional Questions**

SIPP core content also includes small sections that deal with health insurance ownership and coverage (Medicare coverage, Medicaid, private and employer-provided health insurance, and reasons for noncoverage), education (educational attainment, adult school enrollment, and educational assistance), and energy assistance and school lunch program participation.

Table 3-1 lists possible income and benefit sources, along with some special indicators.

## **Core Content for Pre-1996 Panels**

Core content in the paper surveys used before the 1996 Panel was structured differently, in four very distinct sections that are described below.

### **Labor Force and Reciprocity**

The first set of survey questions addressed the respondent's labor force status, sources of any income received, participation in government transfer programs, and health insurance coverage during the 4-month reference period. Respondents were asked about any employment during each of the 4 months prior to the interview month, although detailed information about their specific jobs was not collected here. Respondents who were employed were asked about the number of hours they worked during a typical week and the number of weeks they worked. For those who did not work, SIPP interviewers asked if they were on layoff or had looked for a job. These survey questions also elicited whether any income had been received from a list of potential sources, including government programs. Respondents were asked about their ownership of assets, although this section of the interview did not include questions about amounts earned in those assets.

### **Earnings and Employment**

This section of the SIPP core asked respondents who reported any employment during the 4-month reference period covered by the interview a more detailed series of questions about the jobs they held. Interviewers collected information for up to two different "wage and salary" jobs in each wave. For each job, data were collected on occupation, industry, and work activities and duties. Several questions aimed to determine the total pay from each job for each month of the reference period. Similar information was collected for up to two different "self-employment" jobs in each wave.

**Table 3-1. Types of Income Recorded in SIPP**

<p><b>Wage or Salary Income</b>  Income from job 1  Income from job 2  Income from business 1  Income from business 2</p> <p><b>Program and Miscellaneous Income (General Amounts Type 1)</b>  Social Security  U.S. Government Railroad Retirement payments  Federal Supplemental Security Income  State Supplemental Security Income  State unemployment compensation  Supplemental Unemployment Benefits  Other unemployment compensation  Veterans compensation or pensions  Black Lung payments  Worker's Compensation  State temporary sickness or disability benefits  Employer or union temporary sickness benefits  Employer disability payments  Severance pay  Payments from a sickness, accident, or disability insurance policy purchased on your own  Aid to Families with Dependent Children/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families  General Assistance or General Relief  Foster child care payments  Other welfare  Women, Infants and Children nutrition programs  Pass through child support payments  Food Stamps  Child support payments  Alimony payments  Pension from company or union  Federal Civil Service or other federal civilian employee pensions  U.S. military retirement pay  National Guard or Reserve Forces retirement  State government pensions  Local government pensions  Income—paid-up life insurance policies or annuities  Estates and trusts  Other payments for retirement, disability, or survivor  GI Bill/VEAP education benefits  Other VA educational assistance  Draw from IRA/Keogh 401(k) or thrift plan  Income assistance from a charitable group  Money from relatives or friends  Lump-sum payments  Income from roomers or boarders  National Guard or Reserve pay  Incidental or casual earnings  Other cash income not included elsewhere</p>	<p><b>Asset Income (General Amounts Type 2)</b>  Regular/passbook savings accounts in a bank, savings and loan, or credit union  Money market deposit accounts  Certificates of Deposit or other savings certificates  NOW, Super NOW, or other interest-earning checking accounts  Money market funds  U.S. government securities  U.S. Government Savings Bonds (E, EE)  Municipal or corporate bonds  IRA or Keogh account  Other interest-earning assets  Stocks or mutual fund shares  Rental property  Mortgages from which payments are received  Royalties  Other financial investments not already mentioned</p> <p><b>Noncash Income (other than WIC and Food Stamps)</b>  Public housing occupancy  Rent subsidies  Energy assistance  Subsidized school lunches or breakfasts</p> <p><b>Special Indicators</b>  Worked  Disabled  VA disability rating of 100%  VA disability of less than 100%  Medicare  Medicaid</p> <p><b>Educational Assistance</b>  College work study  Health or Nursing Grant, ROTC, NSF Grant  Stafford Grant  Perkins Grant  SLS Grant  Grant, scholarship, tuition reimbursement from school attended  Teaching or research assistantship from school attended  Grant or scholarship from the state, such as SSIGP, Douglas scholarships  Grant or scholarship from some other <i>Source</i>, such as foundation, corporation, community group, National Merit scholarships  PELL Grant  Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants  National Direct Student Loan  Guaranteed Student Loan  JTPA training  Employer assistance  Fellowship/scholarship  Other financial aid</p>
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## **Amounts of Income Received**

The third group of core questions addressed the amounts of income or benefits received from sources other than earnings.<sup>3</sup> Detailed information was also collected about participation in government transfer programs. For each nongovernment, nonasset source reported (e.g., alimony payments), respondents were asked the amount of income received during each of the prior 4 months. If benefits were received from government programs, respondents were asked the reason for program participation and who within the household was covered. Questions about asset income, from sources such as interest, dividends, rents, and royalties, sought only the total amount for the 4-month reference period. Examples of assets include money market funds, stocks, rental property, and other financial investments. An example of income earned from an asset would be the interest from a savings account.

## **Program Questions**

The final section of the SIPP core included questions about participation in programs that provide subsidized housing, energy assistance, and school meal programs.

# **Topical Content**

Topical questions are those that are not repeated in each wave. These questions usually appear in separate topical modules that follow the core questions. Topical modules are designed to gather specific information on a wide variety of subjects. They provide a broader picture of the types of individuals who are responding to the survey and give SIPP some flexibility in collecting data on emerging issues. Some topical modules are included in each panel but, unlike the core content, are not in each wave. The frequency and timing of these modules may vary. For example, the personal history topical modules are always administered once, in Waves 1 and 2. Other topical modules are asked multiple times within the same panel; the Assets and Liabilities module, for example, is included four times within the 1996 Panel.

In some instances, the interview flows more smoothly if topical questions are placed with core questions that relate to the same topic. For example, topical questions on asset balances are divided between items included in the core questionnaire and items included in a separate topical module. SIPP asks questions about ownership and an income amount in the core. Questions relating to asset balances appear in the asset topical module. Similarly, home-based-employment and size-of-firm data collected in the 1992 and 1993 Panels (Waves 6 and 3, respectively) are incorporated into the core questionnaire. The term *topical module*, therefore, actually refers to all topical items of the same theme, instead of those that are grouped together into a distinct module, because the frequency with which the item appears is more important than its location.

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<sup>3</sup> As with all of SIPP, respondents include all people 15 years old and over. When children under 15 have their own income, it is recorded as having been received by an adult on their behalf.

Reference periods for items in topical modules vary widely, ranging from the respondent’s status at the time of the interview to the respondent’s experience over his or her entire life. When working with data from the SIPP topical modules, analysts should check question wording concepts carefully to ascertain the reference period. They should also check the universe for each question, because topical modules are not uniformly asked of all respondents. For example, only people 25 years of age or older are asked topical module questions about their retirement and pension accounts. Questions on shelter costs and energy usage are asked only of the reference person. In other modules, a screening question will determine who is and is not asked the remainder of the module—in the case of the Work Schedule module, for example, only those who worked during the previous month answer the entire set of questions.

The relationship between topical module titles and content is not perfectly consistent. Over the history of SIPP, there have been situations in which either the topical module content changed with no change in title or the topical module title changed with little change in content. In a few situations, content has “floated” from one topical module to another. And sometimes there has been significant overlap in content between two topical modules with different titles.

The actual questions are provided with the microdata technical documentation. Specific topical modules are discussed below, with the panels and waves listed in brackets (e.g., [93-3, 96-6] for a module asked in the third wave of the 1993 Panel and the sixth wave of the 1996 Panel). Chapter 5 lists topical modules and the panels and waves in which they were included in the survey. Table 3-2 groups topical modules thematically (modules may appear in more than one category).

**Table 3-2. Topical Modules Grouped Thematically**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Topical Module</b>
Health, Disability, & Physical Well-Being	Adult Well-Being; Children’s Well-Being; Functional Limitations and Disability; Health and Disability; Health Status and Utilization of Health Care Services; Long-Term Care; Medical Expenses and Work Disability; Work Disability History
Financial	Annual Income and Retirement Accounts; Assets and Liabilities; Real Estate Property and Vehicles; Reciprocity History; Retirement Expectations and Pension Plan Coverage; School Enrollment and Financing; Selected Financial Assets; Shelter Costs and Energy Usage; Support for Nonhousehold Members; Taxes
Child Care & Financial Support	Child Care; Child Support Agreements; Child Support Paid; Support for Nonhousehold Members
Education & Employment	Education and Training History; Employment History; Job Offers; School Enrollment and Financing; Work-Related Expenses; Work Schedule
Family & Household Characteristics & Living Conditions	Extended Measures of Well-Being; Family Background; Fertility History; Household Relationships; Marital History
Personal History	Education and Training History; Employment History; Fertility History; Marital History; Migration History; Reciprocity History; Work Disability History
Welfare Reform	Eligibility for and Reciprocity of Public Assistance; Benefits; Job Search and Training Assistance; Job Subsidies; Transportation Assistance; Health Care; Food Assistance; Electronic Transfer of Benefits; Denial of Benefits

## Specific Topical Modules

**Adult Well-Being.** Asks the reference person about consumer durables, living conditions, crime, neighborhood conditions, community services, basic needs, and food adequacy. This topical module assesses the standard of living of SIPP respondents. It is similar to Extended Measures of Well-Being and incorporates Basic Needs information that was asked as a separate module in 93-9. [93-9, 96-8]

**Annual Earnings and Benefits.** Includes questions that ask people about their calendar-year wages and salaries and income from their own businesses, as well as the receipt of certain employer-provided benefits not covered elsewhere in SIPP, such as the use of a company car or truck, an expense account, or the provision of free meals and lodging. In addition, a series of questions is administered about reasons for leaving for those persons who left a job during the calendar year. Questions about calendar-year earnings, taxes, health and life insurance deductions, and retirement contributions are designed to obtain the most accurate data available, and respondents are encouraged to refer to W-2 forms and other records. This module is administered twice per panel. [84-6]

**Annual Income and Retirement Accounts.** Obtains respondent estimates of calendar-year business income and respondents' personal retirement plans. The module asks about businesses owned by respondents, gross income and expenses to such businesses, net income to such businesses, retirement accounts, including IRA, Keogh, and 401(k), and respondent participation in those retirement plans. [84-9, 85-5, 85-8, 86-5, 87-5, 88-5, 90-5, 90-8, 91-5, 91-8, 92-5, 92-8, 93-5, 93-8, 96-4, 96-7, 96-10]

**Assets, Liabilities, and Eligibility.** Collects information about the value of assets and debt on assets and expands on data gathered in the core questions. The intent of this topical module is to derive a comprehensive measure of household net worth and to collect information used to determine eligibility for federal assistance programs. To that end, the topical module includes selected additional questions needed to determine program eligibility. Some of the assets included are savings accounts, stocks, mutual funds, and bonds. Data on unsecured liabilities such as loans, credit cards, and medical bills are also gathered. Assets and liabilities that are held jointly are identified to prevent double-counting. The 1996 version of this module has seven sections: value of business; interest earning accounts; stocks and mutual funds; mortgages; other assets; assets and liabilities; and real estate, shelter costs, dependent care, and vehicle ownership. (Also asked as Assets and Liabilities.) [84-4, 84-7, 85-3, 85-7, 86-4, 86-7, 87-4, 90-4, 91-7, 92-4, 93-7, 96-3, 96-6, 96-9, 96-12]

**Child Care.** Collects information about all child care arrangements, for all children under 15, from mothers, single fathers, or guardians, regardless of labor force status. Those with children under age 15 are asked about the type of child care arrangements, who provides the care, the number of hours of care per week, where the care is provided, and the cost of the care. The module asks whether a relative or nonrelative cared for the child, and if the child was in school. Before the 1993 Panel, the module collected information about only one to two child care arrangements from mothers, single fathers, or guardians who were either working, in school, or



looking for a job during the 4-month reference period. [84-5, 85-6, 86-3, 86-6, 87-3, 87-6, 88-3, 88-6, 89-3, 90-3, 91-3, 92-6, 92-9, 93-3, 93-6, 96-4, 96-10]

**Child Support Agreements.** Helps determine whether money received as child support affects participation in government programs and whether lack of support from one parent causes the other parent to need government assistance. The module collects information about characteristics of child support agreements, the annual amount and frequency of payments, and provisions for health care costs. Additional questions cover custodial arrangements, contact with public agencies for assistance in collection of child support, frequency of contact with the absent parent, current place of residence of the absent parent, and reasons for nonaward of child support. Questions about paternity establishment status are also asked about children of women with nonwritten agreements and all never married women. [85-6, 86-3, 86-6, 87-3, 87-6, 88-3, 88-6, 89-3, 90-3, 90-6, 91-3, 92-6, 92-9, 93-3, 93-6, 93-9, 96-5, 96-11]

**Child Support Paid.** Serves as a counterpart to the Child Support Agreements module. It seeks information about support for children of the respondent who are under 21 years old and who live with another parent or guardian at any time during the module's reference period of 4 months. [96-3, 96-6, 96-9, 96-12]

**Children's Well-Being.** Asks the designated parent or guardian about the health of children in the household, care of the child by nonfamily members, activities the family does with the children (such as reading and outings), lessons and activities outside of school, rules for children's TV viewing, and the respondent's opinion about the quality of the neighborhood. The module obtains information about children in three age groups—under 6 years old, ages 6–11, and ages 12–17—for as many as seven children in each category. Certain questions target fathers or stepfathers who are not designated parents; other questions address whether the child attends a public or private school. Content of this module varies across different panels and waves; analysts should check the documentation for exact content. [92-9, 93-6, 93-9, 96-6, 96-11]

**Education and Training History.** Collects information about respondent's highest level of school completed or degree received, courses or programs studied, and dates of receipt of high school and postsecondary degrees or diplomas. The module determines if the respondent attended a public or a private high school. Job-related-training questions address training designed to help find or develop skills for a new job as well as to improve skills at the current or most recent job. People 15 years of age and older are asked whether they have received job training; if they have, they are asked about the duration of the training, how it was used, how it was paid for, and if it was federally sponsored.<sup>4</sup> (Variations are also asked as Education and Work History [84-3] and Education and Training [84-6].) [86-2, 87-2, 88-2, 89-2, 90-2, 91-2, 92-2, 93-2, 96-2]

**Employer-Provided Health Benefits.** Collects data on the availability of health care benefits from employers and the demographics of workers with and without employer-provided health coverage. The module asks whether the plan restricts the respondent to specified doctors,

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<sup>4</sup> All of the "History" topical modules are designed to collect information about the respondent's experiences prior to the beginning of the SIPP panel. This information is most useful in combination with the more current longitudinal information collected during the panel.

if family members are covered, and whether any family members have pre-existing conditions not covered by the plan. The module also asks about long-term health care options. [96-5]

**Employment History.** Identifies patterns of employment, length of employment at certain jobs, and reasons for any periods of unemployment subsequent to the respondent's first job. Beginning with the 1996 Panel, specific questions that address type of work done, job duties, and the industry in which the respondent works were moved into the core content; previously, such questions had been part of this module. [86-2, 87-2, 88-2, 89-2, 90-2, 91-2, 92-1, 93-1, 96-1]

**Extended Measures of Well-Being.** Assesses the standard of living of SIPP respondents. Three types of questions address the objective physical conditions in which the respondents live, respondents' ability to meet specified basic needs during the reference period, and respondents' subjective assessments of the quality of their living situations. Included under the first category are questions about the presence and condition of specified consumer durable goods in the home (e.g., clothes washers, refrigerators, air conditioners) and the physical condition of the home itself (e.g., condition of the roof and walls, state of the home's electrical wiring and plumbing). Another series of questions concerns conditions in the respondent's neighborhood, such as safety, cleanliness, and traffic. The second group of questions concerns whether members of the respondent's household had sufficient food to eat during the 4-month reference period and whether they were able to pay rent and other bills or to obtain medical care when needed. Respondents are also asked about the sources of help available when the respondent is in need (e.g., family, friends, or community). Finally, respondents rate their satisfaction with the quality of different aspects of their living conditions. Included are items such as the quality of the furnishings, convenience of the home to shopping, and the general state of repair of their home. (Some of those questions have been asked as a Basic Needs module [93-9].) [91-6, 92-3]

**Family Background.** Asked of people between ages 25 and 64. Obtains family characteristics at the time of the respondent's 16th birthday, including how many brothers and sisters the person had, with whom the person lived, the highest grade of school completed by the parents, and the occupations of the parents. [86-2, 87-2, 88-2]

**Fertility History.** Asked only of females 15 years of age and older and males 18 and older. Men are asked about the number of children they have fathered, and women are asked about their birth histories. Interviewers ask women who have had children when their first and last children were born, along with questions about their employment status during pregnancy and prior to the birth of their first child, circumstances of any absence from work before and after the first birth, and the maternity leave policies of their employers. Postbirth employment is also covered. [84-8, 85-4, 86-2, 87-2, 88-2, 89-2, 90-2, 91-2, 92-2, 93-2, 96-2]

**Functional Limitations and Disability.** Provides data that can be used to evaluate links between types of disability, the family financial situation, and program participation. This module is asked in three variations: overall, adult, and children. Adults are asked the standard Activities of Daily Living (ADL) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) battery of questions. Questions address physical and mental conditions affecting the respondent, the use of mobility aids, vision and hearing impairments, speech difficulties, lifting and aerobic difficulties, and the ability to function independently within the home. For those under age 22, the questions

are modified, referring to age-appropriate activities (e.g., questions about work activities are recast to ask about analogous school activities). Questions about children also address the use of special education services. For those under age 15, the interviewer asks the questions of the designated parent or guardian. [90-3, 90-6, 91-3, 92-6, 93-3 for overall module; 92-9, 93-6, 96-5, 96-11 for separate children and adults modules]

**Health and Disability.** Gathers data for all sample members about their general health, functional limitations (using the standard ADL battery of questions), work disability, and the need for personal assistance. Respondents are asked about any hospital stays during the reference period, other periods of illness, other health facilities used, and their health insurance coverage. Information on children is collected from a designated parent or guardian. (Variations are also asked as Functional Activities, Disability Status of Children, and Disability Questions.) [84-3 for Health and Disability; 88-6, 89-3 for Functional Activities; 85-6, 86-3, 87-6, 88-3, 88-6, 89-3 for Disability Status of Children; 96-4 for Disability Questions]

**Health Status and Utilization of Health Care Services.** Asks about hospital stays, including any in psychiatric institutions; other illnesses or injuries that left the respondent bedridden for at least most of 1 day; doctor visits and frequency of visits, dental visits and frequency of visits; where the respondent seeks health advice (doctor's office, clinic, hospital); and health insurance coverage. (Also asked as Utilization of Health Care Services.) [85-6, 86-3, 87-6, 88-3, 88-6, 89-3, 90-3, 90-6, 91-3, 92-6, 92-9, 93-3, 93-6, 96-3, 96-6, 96-9, 96-12]

**Home Health Care.** Asks about the type and sources of help given to respondents who needed help with their personal care, household activities, and basic errands because of a health condition. Respondents are asked if caregivers were relatives or nonrelatives, and whether or not the caregivers were household members. This module also asks about members of the household who might have given such care, on a nonprofessional level, to a person outside the household. Questions determine the relationship of the caregiver and recipient(s) and the kind of care given. [88-6, 89-3]

**Household Relationships.** Collects information about relationships among household members. The SIPP core questions gather extensive information about household composition for each month of the panel. This information allows for the identification of families and subfamilies and details each household member's relationship to the household reference person.<sup>5</sup> As extensive as this information is, it does not cover the interrelationships of all household members. For example, the SIPP core provides no information about the relationships between members of two different unrelated (to the household reference person) subfamilies residing in the same household. This topical module fills that gap by collecting complete information about how each member of the household is related to every other member of the household. Relationships are specified in detail; for example, a brother is a full brother, half

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<sup>5</sup> The family is defined by the Census Bureau as two or more people who are living together and are related by blood, marriage, or adoption. A primary family is the family containing the household reference person; an unrelated subfamily is a family that does not contain the reference person or anyone related to the reference person. Related subfamilies are families within the primary family. A daughter and husband living with the daughter's parents would constitute a related subfamily. The reference person is the person in whose name the home is owned or rented. If the house is owned jointly by a married couple, either the husband or the wife may be listed as the reference person.

brother, stepbrother, or adoptive brother. In-law relationships are also identified. [84-8, 85-4, 86-2, 87-2, 88-2, 89-2, 90-2, 91-2, 92-2, 93-2, 96-2]

**Housing Costs, Conditions, and Energy Usage.** Collects information on mortgage payments, real estate taxes, fire insurance, principal owned, when the mortgage was obtained, and interest rates; rent; type of fuel used and heating facilities; appliances; and vehicles.<sup>6</sup> Questions on value of home and automobile are used in conjunction with assets and liabilities reported in the Assets and Liabilities Topical Module to calculate each individual's net worth. This topical module also helps to fulfill a need for information concerning energy usage that has resulted from increased interest in recent years over the rising costs of energy and concerns about conservation. The information can be used in analysis of the requirements of individuals and households who participate in energy assistance programs. [84-4]

**Job Offers.** Asks about any job offers received by respondents who were looking for work or who were on layoff during the reference period. If the respondent was offered a job and did not accept it, questions probe the reason for rejecting the job and the amount of money that was offered. [85-6, 86-3]

**Long-Term Care.** Focuses on health-related conditions that might cause a person to need help around the home. Specific questions address the ability of people in the household to manage their personal care, housework, meal preparation, and basic errands outside the home. The module ascertains whether or not individuals providing such assistance are household members. Additional questions ask about community services and the financial burden of acquiring assistance. The module also asks about the activities of respondents who themselves provided such assistance on a nonprofessional basis to individuals outside the household. (Also asked as Home Health Care.) [85-6, 86-3, 87-6, 88-3, 88-6, 89-3]

**Marital History.** Asks questions of all respondents aged 15 and older who have ever been married. The date of the present marriage is determined; for those married more than once, SIPP records the dates of their first two marriages and their last marriage, if married more than twice. If appropriate, respondents are asked when their previous marriages ended and whether they were widowed or divorced at the end of their marriages. [84-8, 85-4, 86-2, 87-2, 88-2, 89-2, 90-2, 91-2, 92-2, 93-2, 96-2]

**Medical Expenses and Work Disability.** Gathers data about out-of-pocket medical expenses, health services, doctor visits, prescription drugs, insurance reimbursement, and health and physical conditions that might affect the respondent's ability to work. The reasons for and length of any hospitalizations are determined, and respondents are asked about the types of medical professionals who delivered care. Most questions apply to both children and adults. (Also asked as Medical Expenses.) [87-7, 88-4, 89-4, 90-7, 91-4, 92-7, 93-4, 93-7, 96-3, 96-6, 96-9, 96-12]

**Migration History.** Asks respondents aged 15 and older where they were born, where they have lived, and how long they have lived in those places. Respondents born in a foreign country

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<sup>6</sup> Subsequent to the 1984 Panel, questions on energy usage were combined into a separate module. Vehicles and housing values are retained together in a module entitled "Real Estate and Vehicles."

are asked about their citizenship status and when they came to the United States to stay. [84-8, 85-4, 86-2, 87-2, 88-2, 89-2, 90-2, 91-2, 92-2, 93-2, 96-2]

**Property Income and Taxes.** Collects information on rental income received during the calendar year and on interest earned and/or dividends from assets such as savings accounts, money market deposit accounts, interest-earning checking accounts, bonds, or stocks. They are also asked about federal and state income tax liabilities and certain other tax information such as type of return, use of selected schedules (for example, Schedule A, Itemized Deductions; Schedule B, Interest or Dividends; or Form 4835, Farm Rental Income), and number of exemptions. The tax questions are asked in order to develop better estimates of the distribution of after-tax income and to help build better microsimulation models of the tax and transfer system. This module is administered twice per panel. [84-6]

**Real Estate Property and Vehicles.** Gathers information about housing tenure and financing, other real estate ownership, and automobile ownership. Home owners are asked a series of questions that allow the estimation of net real estate equity. Questions about vehicles address ownership, type of vehicle (i.e., car, truck, motorcycle), value, and amount owed. Those questions are also used in program eligibility simulations. (A variation of this module is asked as Real Estate, Shelter Costs, Dependent Care, and Vehicles.) [84-7, 85-3, 85-7, 86-4, 86-7, 87-4, 87-7, 88-4, 90-4, 90-7, 91-4, 91-7, 92-4, 92-7, 93-4, 93-7]

**Reasons for Not Working/Reservation Wage.** Ascertains the reasons that persons are not in the labor force and the conditions under which persons might want to join the labor force. The reservation wage questions ask about the pay rate that a person would require in order to begin working (Ryscavage, 1987). Questions are also asked about job search and, if people have been offered but did not accept a job, the reason they refused it. This module was discontinued after the 1985 Panel. [84-5]

**Reciency History.** Obtains a profile of a respondent's pattern of participation in certain government programs prior to the beginning of the SIPP panel. Specific questions address the first time a respondent participated in a particular program, the length of participation, and the number of times the respondent has been in the program. [86-2, 87-2, 88-2, 89-2, 90-2, 91-2, 92-1, 93-1, 96-1]

**Retirement Expectations and Pension Plan Coverage.** Obtains information about the respondent's pension plan coverage for the most important current job or business, and information from persons currently receiving retirement benefits from a former job or business. Respondents are asked about their coverage and vesting in pension plans, types of plans, the reasons they are not included by or do not participate in plans, current contributions and amounts of money in their accounts if applicable, and how the money in their own plans is invested. Other questions concern loans from pension accounts and treatment of lump sums received from prior job pension plans.

Respondents currently receiving pension income are asked about the types of pension they receive, provisions for cost-of-living adjustments, and health benefits. Respondents are also asked Industry and Occupation data about the job or business from which their pensions are

received. (Also asked as Pension Plan Coverage [84-7].) [84-4, 85-7, 86-4, 86-7, 87-4, 90-4, 91-7, 92-4, 93-9, 96-7]

**School Enrollment and Financing.** Seeks information about basic educational attainment, enrollment in public and private schools, and whether those in government programs differ from others in terms of financing their education and their sources of educational assistance. Asked of people aged 15 and older, the module includes questions to pinpoint the grade level of people enrolled in a general, technical, or business school; their pattern of full- or part-time enrollment; amount of tuition and fees; costs of room and board; and books and supplies. Specific sources of educational assistance, such as the GI Bill or employer assistance, are also determined. (Also asked as Education Financing and Enrollment.) [84-9, 85-5, 85-8, 86-5, 87-5, 88-5, 90-5, 90-8, 91-5, 91-8, 92-5, 92-8, 93-5, 93-8, 96-5]

**Selected Financial Assets.** Focuses on the value of such assets as savings bonds, checking accounts, retirement accounts, life insurance, and the number of years respondents have held certain assets. [87-7, 88-4, 90-7, 91-4, 92-7, 93-4]

**Shelter Costs and Energy Usage.** Collects information on rent or mortgages, real estate taxes, and insurance; energy costs; and motor vehicles. The information is pertinent to the determination of eligibility for a number of federal assistance programs. (Also asked as Housing Costs, Conditions, and Energy Usage.) [84-4, 86-6, 87-3]

**Support for Nonhousehold Members.** Provides information about respondents' routine payments supporting people who are not current household members. Includes both child support payments for own children under 21 years of age and payments made to (or for) people who are not children of the respondents—for example, an elderly parent in a nursing home or an adult child living away from home and in an entry-level job. Questions about child support include number of children supported, type and year of agreement, annual amount and method of payment, health care provisions and custodial arrangements, and amount of contact with the absent children. Questions about support for other persons outside the household include their relationship to the respondent, living arrangement, and annual amount of support paid. [84-5, 84-8, 85-4, 85-6, 86-3, 86-6, 87-3, 87-6, 88-3, 88-6, 89-3, 90-3, 90-6, 91-3, 92-6, 92-9, 93-3, 93-6, 93-9, 96-5]

**Taxes.** Includes questions about exemptions, calendar-year wages and salaries, income from businesses, itemized deductions, and earned income credits. Respondents are asked about federal and state income tax liabilities, exemptions, amounts owed for federal and property taxes, and amounts from a variety of tax schedules. To help ensure accuracy, interviewers encourage respondents to refer to income tax returns and other records. Historically, this module has been administered at least twice per panel, generally in the spring when respondents were likely to be preparing their tax returns for the prior year. (Also asked as Earnings and Benefits, and Property Income and Taxes.) [84-6, 84-9, 85-5, 85-8, 86-5, 87-5, 88-5, 90-5, 90-8, 91-5, 91-8, 92-5, 92-8, 93-5, 93-8, 96-4, 96-7, 96-10]

**Time Spent Outside Work Force.** Collects information about work history and reasons for not working. Asked of people 21 or older, this short module addresses up to four periods of 6 months or longer in which the respondent did not work at a paid job or business. [90-6]

**Welfare History and Child Support.** Collects information on how long individuals may have received aid from specific welfare programs and on child support agreements and their fulfillment. The data from the welfare history questions will be used to measure the extent to which persons and households have been dependent upon government transfer programs in their general finances and will be helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the programs.

One series of questions in the module concerns the Food Stamp, AFDC/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and SSI programs. Current recipients are asked how long they have been receiving, or have been authorized to receive, these benefits. Recipients and nonrecipients are asked whether they had at any previous time applied for benefits, whether they received them, and, if so, when and for how long. This module was incorporated into a series of history modules, collectively called the Personal History Topical Module, beginning with the 1986 Panel.

The Child Support Topical Module attempts to determine whether those entitled to receive child support payments have in fact received them. The module asks whether the child support agreement was court ordered or arranged otherwise and how the payments were to be made. It also asks for the amount and regularity of payment and whether a child support enforcement office has provided any help. [84-5]

**Welfare Reform.** Seeks information about eligibility for and reciprocity of public assistance. Specific questions address benefits, assistance that supports a respondent seeking work or acquiring training, requirements for receiving benefits (such as job hunting, drug testing, etc.), job subsidies, transportation assistance, health care, and food assistance. This module also gathers information about electronic transfer of benefits and denial of benefits to the respondent. [96-8]

**Work Disability History.** Asks a series of questions about chronic health conditions that may affect the amount or type of work a respondent can do. Included are any such physical, mental, or other health conditions that interfere with the respondent's ability to work for at least 3 months. Questions are asked about when the limiting condition first became an issue, whether the person was working at the time, whether the condition resulted from an accident or injury, and if so, where the accident or injury occurred. Shorter-term conditions (including pregnancy) are not included as limiting conditions. [86-2, 87-2, 88-2, 89-2, 90-2, 91-2, 92-2, 93-2, 96-2]

**Work-Related Expenses.** Asks about work-related expenses for each employer the respondent had during the reference period. Questions address various costs of working, such as union dues, licenses, special tools, and uniforms. Mode of transportation and mileage driven to and from work are determined, along with any parking or mass transit fees. (Also asked as Work-Related Expenses and Child Support Paid.) [84-5, 84-8, 85-4, 86-6, 87-3, 96-3, 96-6, 96-9, 96-12]

**Work Schedule.** Collects information about the number of hours and days worked during a typical week in the fourth reference month. Questions about whether or not the respondent worked only at home on any days are included. [87-6, 88-3, 88-6, 89-3, 90-3, 91-3, 92-6, 92-9, 93-3, 93-6, 93-9, 96-4, 96-10]